

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Invitees and Attendees

Appendix A. Focus Group Invitees & Attendees

The table below lists the project stakeholders and sponsors who were contacted to participate in the focus groups, and indicates who attended the meetings.

Focus Group Invitees and Participants

Project Sponsor	Attended Focus Group
<i>Transit Agencies</i>	
AC Transit	yes
BART	yes
CCCTA	yes
LAVTA	yes
NCTPA	no
Petaluma Transit	yes
SamTrans	yes
Santa Rosa CityBus	yes
SCVTA	yes
SFCTA	yes
WestCAT	yes
Vallejo	no
City of Vacaville	no
Sonoma County Transit	no
Tri-Delta ECCTA	no

Project Sponsor	Attended Focus Group
Fairfield/Suisun Transit	no
Bayview Hunters Point Foundation for Community Improvement	yes
City of Redwood City	yes
Outreach & Escort	yes
San Leandro Transportation Management Organization	no
San Rafael City Schools	yes
San Mateo Medical Center	no
City of Benicia	no
City of Gilroy	no
Family and Children's Services	no
Oakland Public Library	Phone interview
San Mateo County	Phone interview
Sonoma County	no
WCCTAC	Phone interview

APPENDIX B

CMA Focus Group Discussion Invitation and Questions

Appendix B. CMA Focus Group Discussion Invitation and Questions



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
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MTC Lifeline Transportation Program Evaluation

Lifeline Program Administrator Group Meeting Overview

March 16, 2011, 12:00pm – 2:00pm
MTC, 101 8th St., Oakland
3rd Floor, Fishbowl Conference Room

MEETING PURPOSE

To assist participants in preparing for the March 16 Lifeline Transportation Program Evaluation meeting, this discussion guide is provided to introduce the topics we hope to discuss.

To help ensure the meeting will be both informative and productive, it would be of great value if those participating in the meeting would review this document in advance and come to the meeting prepared to contribute to the discussion on the subjects outlined below.

If, after reading these questions, you would like to suggest other high-priority topics for discussion on March 16, please e-mail Jennifer Yeamans at jyeamans@mtc.ca.gov. Those unable to participate in the meeting in person are invited to contact Jennifer directly to offer responses to the questions below. Lunch will be provided at the meeting.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The discussion will focus on four main topic areas, as follows.

1. Program Administration and Interagency Coordination

- a. We know there are a lot of different issues related to the administration of the Lifeline program, and with your help we've identified many of them. Of these, what is the highest-priority issue you believe MTC should address in the next set of program guidelines?
- b. Have you made changes within your county to improve administration of the Lifeline Program that might be applicable to others?
- c. What is working well about the program that you want MTC to keep the way it is in the next set of program guidelines/call for projects?
- d. Do you think the challenges in administering the Lifeline program are hampering its effectiveness in meeting the program goals?

2. Project Selection Process

- a. What else do you think MTC or your agency could do to improve outreach about upcoming funding opportunities?
- b. Is the current basic application effective at soliciting good projects? How should it be changed?
- c. How effective were the general project evaluation criteria in selecting projects that best met program goals? Should the criteria change for the next round?
- d. Would you prefer stricter guidance from MTC on project criteria/eligibility, or greater flexibility?
- e. Should anything else about the project selection process change for the next round?

3. Funding, Project Delivery, and Oversight

- a. Given the constraints associated with each funding source, how could the program be administered more effectively or efficiently?
- b. If you have unfunded capital needs identified in CBTPs (especially bike/ped projects), are these projects likely to be funded through other sources? What would help facilitate that?
- c. What are the major project delivery challenges that you think project sponsors are facing once their projects are underway, and what could MTC or your agency do differently to help address them?
- d. Are the project oversight requirements reasonable and effective? What should be changed about project oversight requirements going forward?

4. What Is the Level of Support for Certain Potential Changes to the Program?

- a. Examples: priority for certain types of projects, minimum grant size, two-year funding cycle. We will bring additional ideas for your consideration.

OTHER INFORMATION

MTC staff will bring copies of the program guidelines and programs of projects for both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the Lifeline program for reference as needed. You can also review these documents at: <http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/lifeline/>

QUESTIONS ASKED IN TRANSIT AGENCY FOCUS GROUP

Agenda Item #5: Effectiveness of Lifeline Transportation Program in meeting the mobility needs of low-income persons

- To what extent do the projects address needs for low-income persons, or fill gaps in the public transportation network?
- Is your project meeting your original expectations and goals expressed in the application your agency submitted? In what ways?
- What qualities best define an “effective” project?
- What aspects of your projects do you think were particularly positive and could possibly be replicated at another agency?
- Give an example of a Lesson Learned, about a project that was not effective. Why was it not effective?
- What were the major project delivery challenges that you faced once the project was underway? What can be done to address them?
- What can you tell us about how the project is benefiting the users?
- Have you conducted any program evaluations or otherwise collected information from customers about whether this project has improved their mobility? If so, may we get a copy of the results?

Agenda Item #6: Lifeline Transportation Program application process and project oversight

- What was your experience with the MTC application process? Do you have any suggestions on changes to make it easier or clearer for applicants?
- Are you aware of any potential project sponsors who did not apply? Why were they discouraged from applying?
- We want to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the way the Lifeline Transportation Program is funded and administered. What do you consider to be the strengths? Why? What are the weaknesses?
- Do these strengths or weaknesses directly impact the effectiveness of the program? If so, how?
- What changes would you like to see in the way the program is structured? Why?
- Are the administrative requirements (i.e. contract, quarterly reports, invoicing, etc), reasonable? What would you like to see changed going forward?
- How about project oversight – do you think it's effective?

Agenda Item #7: Suggestions for potential program changes

- In order to have fewer projects, should MTC establish a minimum grant amount (i.e. \$150,000)?
- Should MTC establish a schedule to select new projects every two years?
- Should some priority be given to sustain existing projects, or to fund new projects?
- What other suggestions do you have to change the program guidelines?

QUESTIONS ASKED IN OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER AND NON-PROFIT AGENCY FOCUS GROUP

Agenda Item #5: Effectiveness of Lifeline Transportation Program in meeting the mobility needs of low-income persons

- To what extent do the projects you provide address needs for low-income persons, or fill gaps in the public transportation network?
- Is your project meeting your original expectations and goals expressed in the application your agency submitted? In what ways?
- What do you think is working well in your project?
- What were the major project delivery challenges that you faced once the project was underway? What can be done to address them?
- How do users find out about the services your project is providing?
- What can you tell us about how the project is benefiting the users?
- Have you conducted any program evaluations or otherwise collected information from customers about whether this project has improved their mobility? If so, may we get a copy of the results?

Agenda Item #6: Lifeline Transportation Program application process and project oversight

- What was your experience with the MTC application process? Do you have any suggestions on changes to make it easier or clearer for applicants?
- Are you aware of any potential project sponsors who did not apply? Why were they discouraged from applying?
- Would you prefer stricter guidance from MTC on how projects are evaluated, or greater flexibility?
- Are the administrative requirements (i.e. contract, quarterly reports, invoicing, etc), reasonable? What would you like to see changed going forward?
- How about project oversight – do you think it's effective?
- What changes would you like to see in the way the program is structured? Why?

Agenda Item #7: Suggestions for potential program changes

- Should the Lifeline Transportation Program prioritize or dedicate some or all funding for public transit projects?
- In order to have fewer projects, should MTC establish a minimum grant amount (i.e. \$150,000)?
- Should some form of priority be given to sustain existing projects, or to fund new projects?
- Should continued funding be provided only to projects that demonstrate they have met original program goals and objectives?
- What other suggestions do you have to change the program guidelines?

APPENDIX C

Summary of Focus Group Findings

Appendix C. Summary of Focus Group Findings

In late March/early April 2011, MTC hosted three focus groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the MTC Lifeline Transportation Program. MTC staff facilitated a focus group of Congestion Management Agency (CMA) staff that was conducted on March 16. Transit agency staff participated in one focus group held on March 31, and non-profits and other transportation service providers participated in a focus group held on April 1. The latter two focus groups were facilitated by the study team. This section summarizes key points discussed by focus group participants.

CMA FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The CMA staff responsible for administering the Lifeline Program at each of the nine county congestion management agencies attended a meeting held Wednesday, March 16, 2011.

Key Focus Group Findings

This section summarizes the key focus group findings relating to program administration, interagency coordination, project selection process, funding, project delivery, and oversight.

Program Administration and Interagency Coordination

- Grant deadlines should be synchronized – small agencies in particular don't have the resources to meet varying deadlines.
- Would be very helpful to have a reasonable estimate of overall potential funding, recognizing that this will be modified as more information comes in. For the upcoming call for projects, the funding is fairly certain because MTC is using FY11 funding.
- We'd prefer more time between calls for projects and get the calls altogether, rather than getting the funding sooner but in a fragmented fashion.
- Would prefer to stagger CMA block grants and the Lifeline call for projects.
- Longer grant programs would allow for more innovative thinking. It would be good to be able to bank the money until additional funding came in so that we could have a more substantial grant.
- To improve administration of the Lifeline Program, we set up procedures with the transit agency to coordinate agreements and the invoicing process. We have asked that all sponsors contact a central point at the transit agency to make them aware that a pass-through fee would be associated with any grant money award.
- We developed a list of project priorities and worked off that list as funding became available, rather than having to go back to the board each time for their approval. Prioritizing projects in this way helps when funds trickle in.
- Some Departments of Public Works agencies have been so badly cut that they don't have the time to write grant applications.

Project Selection Process

- MTC should figure out how to get the non-profits back in as potential recipients of grant funding. Transit agencies have a major disincentive for acting as the sponsors in lieu of the non-profits as, besides the administrative headaches; they also see this

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as money that would otherwise come to them. Reconsider position of MTC serving as pass throughs for non-profit agencies. If this can't be figured out, MTC would need to find a way to exert pressure on the transit agencies to serve in this role, but this may not be very effective (strong agreement on this point). When the economy was better it was reasonable to expect the transit agencies to serve as sponsors, but not in the present context.

- Non-profits can play an important role in filling in the gaps in ADA paratransit services.
- Keep in mind that agencies other than the transit agencies can act as sponsors e.g. Public Health or other city/county agencies.
- Make sure there is a long lead time for submitting applications after the call for projects (e.g. four months), as this allows for more outreach.
- MTC should use the CBTP and contact lists from each agency to send out postcard mailings.
- Mail the applications to all those who participated in the previous cycle.
- It has been very helpful to use MTC's translation services in the past.
- In the workshops potential applicants should be given samples of previously successful applications.
- Would you prefer stricter guidance from MTC on project criteria/eligibility, or greater flexibility?
- Flexibility from MTC is better than stricter guidance since we keep getting hung up by funding rules.
- We should be able to roll funds over and not have to send out multiple calls in a year.
- Limit amount of space applicants have to give answers to avoid long essays.
- Not sure what MTC can do about it, but in our county the transit agency assumes that the Lifeline funding is for their purposes only, and it makes it difficult for other projects to get funding.

Funding, Project Delivery, and Oversight

- Let each county decide if it wants to allocate all the funding to transit agencies; don't make this an MTC decision.
- MTC should take care of the agreements and pass through of funds. CMA's do not necessarily have oversight of transit agency projects because they submit directly for Prop 1B and STA. Also the pass through agreements can take a very long time to get approved by the transit agency board, which can be hesitant about liability of signing for project sponsors.
- It would be helpful to be able to switch funds between sources.
- MTC should proactively look for additional funding, such as the gas tax.
- The funding agreements should include a requirement that CMAs be looped into the reporting mechanism, even if it's just cc'ing the CMA representative.
- Since STA or Proposition 1B funding programs don't have funding agreements, there should be a formalized tracking mechanism requirement. The goal is to keep the reporting requirement simple and non-burdensome, but it is important to have the record.
- It would be helpful for CMAs to know which invoices have been submitted by transit agencies to MTC, so that they can track the expenditure of funds.

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- Bike and Pedestrian projects typically have Safe Routes to School grants, the Regional Bicycle Program (RBP), and other sources of funding. If the RBP is flexible enough to accommodate pedestrian and non-regional facilities, capital needs in the CBTP could be well covered. What can't be covered are station or bus stop improvements.
- Certain types of projects are flexible with varying funding levels. Some operational projects take too long to start up and when they do get going they need a long term stable funding source. Shuttle service type projects have a very hard time using this type of funding.
- Some of the non-profits and Cities are good at grant writing but not good at implementation. They get the grants and then sit on it. They might need staff or more help with administration.
- Prior to award CMAs feel a conflict of interest advocating for any one agency or project, particularly if the money is up for competition and the agency is administering the funds. It would be good if MTC could help with the application and implementation process.
- MTC should avoid putting out calls for projects until there is a substantial amount of funding available, and set aside funding for regional projects that cover multiple jurisdictions.
- Most CMAs don't have the time or resources for user surveys.

What Is the Level of Support for Certain Potential Changes to the Program?

Focus group participants were asked to weigh in on potential changes to the Lifeline program. This section summarizes the group's responses to the changes.

Q. Should MTC prioritize certain types of projects?

A. No, leave it to the counties.

Q. Should Lifeline's emphasis be on sustaining rather than expanding services?

A. Let the counties decide.

Q. Should New Freedom Funds be incorporated into the Lifeline Call for Projects?

A. No consensus, but leaning towards keeping these two separate. You could ensure that the needs of people with disabilities and seniors are included in Lifeline, but only those in low-income communities.

Q. Should there be a minimum grant size?

A. No, some of the smaller grants used by non-profits can be very cost-effective.

Q. Should there be a two- or three-year funding cycle?

A. Four favored two year cycle, one favored three year cycle, and the other participants did not feel strongly about the issue.

Q. Should MTC specify that the projects be derived from the CBTPs?

A. No, some of the CBTPs are too old and there are many geographic areas where low-income people reside that are not covered by CBTPs. On the other hand, the CBTPs are a good opportunity to engage residents. The best solution would be to include as an evaluation criterion "community support/public outreach, or a need documented in the CBTP." Agencies could also consider adding some points for those that are derived from CBTP, as was done in Alameda County.

Q. Should MTC use some Cycle Three funding to establish a mobility management study for each county?

A. It would make sense to wait for the outcome of the Transit Sustainability Project before making this decision.

TRANSIT PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Meeting held Thursday, March 31, 2011.

Effectiveness of the Lifeline Transportation Program in Improving Mobility for Low-Income Persons

Evaluation difficult

- Hard to isolate benefits of transit services to just the low-income population. Many routes serve more than just the low-income population. Conversely, the majority of routes provided by transit agencies serve the low-income population, particularly in suburban and rural areas.
- Difficult to evaluate capital projects; amenities are provided for all income levels.
- Evaluation should focus on projects already funded. Not all Prop 1B funding has been distributed.

Some low-income communities aren't covered

Confusion over whether projects had to be in CBTP to be funded by Lifeline or not. Limiting to just CBTP's is unfair to communities with less concentrated low-income population and no MTC designated Communities of Concern.

Lifeline projects may not meet productivity or ridership expectations

- Lifeline projects by definition are typically going to be the lowest use routes. They will generally not meet a transit agency's productivity standards. If a Lifeline route doesn't meet these productivity standards, then should it be discontinued?
- Several agencies indicated that new Lifeline routes did not see expected ridership increases, and one suggested it may be a better use of funds to augment existing service, where you would see a ridership increase.
- Even with public outreach to identify needs, there is no guarantee that people will use the service if it is put in place.

Example: Monument Medical Center Shuttle in Concord. Operating for three years, then discontinued because did not meet ridership goals. Unclear exactly why ridership wasn't as high as expected.

Lifeline Transportation Program Application Process and Program Oversight

Application is fine, but short timeline is challenging

The current application process is fine. Local timeline—30 days from call for projects to due date—was too short to thoroughly vet and do the outreach required to develop a high-caliber project. Some less-than-ideal projects were submitted. In some cases, projects weren't ready when funding was received. Short timeline also made it difficult to seek approval from boards, particularly when working with other agencies. Short timeline is compounded by lack of predictability in call for projects issuances—agencies can't work on projects in advance of call.

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Lack of predictability is problematic

- Many agencies cited lack of predictability in call for projects, funding availability, and funding distribution as problematic, particularly when working with non-profits and community members.
- Project funding delayed for years. Many capital projects haven't received funds; only some Proposition 1B funds have been distributed. Several participants gave examples of projects which have not yet been funded.

Funding does not cover costs

Transit agencies must subsidize their transit routes above and beyond what is recovered by fares. Given the downturn in the economy that has reduced public funding available to support public transit, agencies have been faced with difficult decisions of curtailing or eliminating routes, including those that have received funding through the Lifeline Program. One agency "quietly decided not to expand the Lifeline program" due to the cost of providing these additional services.

Administrative requirements are burdensome and costly

Agencies do not have enough staff time available to administer projects. Lifeline grant money is not enough to cover costs of administration. Money also doesn't directly help, as staff time is the real premium, and Lifeline doesn't provide enough money to fund an additional FTE or PTE to administer programs.

Example: Volunteer driver/rideshare program in San Mateo County. Grant did not include component to advertise service, hard to find riders who were low-income. People relied on the network they already had, not the volunteer driver pool signed up for the program. Huge administrative burden (e.g. cutting checks for \$3.00); once funding reduced, couldn't afford to continue program.

Challenging when grant funds are cobbled together from a variety of sources. None have coordinated distribution dates. All have different reporting requirements. Some funds lapse, some don't.

Pass-through role is burdensome

Transit agencies generally do not like serving as a pass-through agency for grants. Described as "unfunded mandate" and "nauseating." Sometimes difficult to get non-profit organizations to fill out reporting forms. Noted that first cycle non-profits could directly apply, and second cycle had to get a transit agency to sponsor them. One agency noted that some non-profits would not have applied without help from the transit agency.

Most agencies like local control, though it can be a hindrance to regional programs

Most agencies like that MTC allows a lot of local discretion for Lifeline funds. "Local control is the key to a successful program." However, a county-based program makes it very difficult for agencies that span multiple counties (e.g. BART and AC Transit). Multi-county projects must receive funding and approval from each county CMA administrative body.

Concerns over usefulness of CBTP plans.

Once completed, partners, non-profits, community groups think implementing the CBTP is the transit agency's responsibility. Non-profits will not take the lead on implementing Lifeline projects. Concerns that CBTP's are "stale." Should they be used or should some an abbreviated update be put in place of ones that were completed years ago?

Suggestions for potential program changes

- Have other agencies serve as pass-through agencies, instead of transit agencies.
- Create a set-aside for regional projects, not administered by county CMA's.
- Schedule call for projects on a regular basis (e.g. every fall or every spring). Cancel rather than move the date if funding is not available at the time of the call.
- Reconsider using CBTP's as a component in the next call. Allow references to alternative transportation plans, or documentation of low-income population.
- Clarify whether Lifeline programs must meet MTC's transit performance measures.
- If Lifeline is the highest priority of all of MTC's priorities, consider funding it from regular, more predictable funding sources because STA and Prop 1B funds have not always come through. (Note: not universal agreement on this.)
- Incremental funds for small amounts (e.g. \$6,000) should be rolled over to next funding cycle rather than distributed.
- Consider minimum grant award.
- Continue to allow funds to go to non-profits and community organizations. They fill roles that transit agencies cannot fill.

Best Practices/ Lessons Learned/Examples

- **Seven-Mile House Restaurant in Daly City/Brisbane.** Funded capital project to construct bus stop at unimproved corner. Daly City residents are using a bus stop that is located on a Brisbane corner, but very close to Daly City border. Improvements require encroaching on restaurant property. Grant development required collaboration between City of Brisbane, City of Daly City and Seven Mile House Restaurant owners. Collaboration fostered by grant process may be useful for improving other locations along the Daly City/Brisbane border.
- Projects that have strong community support may not have the anticipated ridership when implemented. Project development should include a check on projected ridership.
- Agencies should implement controls over what projects get submitted for grant funding. For example, SFCTA requires all projects to be in the Capital Improvement Plan, and has instituted a grant sign-off form, which the staff member who will take ownership of the project signs. SCVTA puts the name of the staff person who will lead the project in the grant application.

NON-PROFIT AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP

Meeting held Friday, April 1, 2011

Effectiveness of the Lifeline Transportation Program in Improving Mobility for Low-Income Persons

Non-profits are providing a variety of programs that fulfill the transportation needs of low income community

There are a variety of programs provided by the non-profits and community organizations. These include a low-cost bicycle program, an auto loan program, neighborhood shuttles, medical shuttles, community transportation coordination services, and a parent shuttle. All of these programs had some success in reaching the low-income community and improving mobility. Most of the shuttle services indicated that they did not meet original ridership goals.

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Summary:

- **Treasure Island:** With reduction in SF Muni service on island, there has been an increase in riders who use the Treasure Island Shuttle to get to the Muni line. Most of the population served lives ¼ mile away from nearest Muni stop. While the Muni line (rather than the island shuttle) is the Lifeline-funded service, the participant may not have been aware of this, and suggested enhancements to the shuttle service. In summary, the effect of the reduced Muni service is that people are forced to make transfers from the shuttle to get to Muni.
- **Ways to Work Family Loan Program:** Auto loan program fills in the gaps in regular transit service: late night trips, out-of-county service, work trips with varied schedules.
- **San Rafael Parent Shuttle:** Many parents are undocumented immigrants and will not drive due to the danger of being pulled over and being deported. Shuttle allows parents to come to school to volunteer, Friday morning Mercado, and after-school and evening events. Shuttle did not meet ridership expectations, but process of developing shuttle brought community together and identified transportation needs. Daily ridership is low. Biggest ridership is for special events.
- **Cycles of Change:** Program is multi-faceted. People who receive a bike come back for tune-ups and make use of other services provided by Cycles for Change and by neighboring service organizations. They are meeting goals related to number of bikes distributed and follow-up activities. The program has gone beyond original expectations and has added youth job training and in-depth mechanical skills courses.
- **Bayview Hunter's Point shuttle:** Provides access to grocery stores, as well as medical services. After a very slow build-up of ridership, it provides service to 200 people per day on 10 routes. Hospital taxi voucher program more difficult. Working with hospitals is a challenge.
- **Monument shuttle (Concord, Contra Costa County):** Shuttle was important and useful for the people who used it, but due to lack of ridership, it was discontinued after three years. Potential riders undocumented, afraid to leave house due to deportation threat. Suggested that they needed more than three years to build ridership. Lack of Spanish-speaking dispatchers gave shuttle reputation for unreliability. Needed culturally sensitive dispatch training.
- **Redwood City Shuttle Service** Ridership not as high as hoped, but does provide needed alternative service. Had to limit service to low-income area of Redwood City, which left out seniors who could qualify, but lived in higher-income areas, despite the fact that those areas lack public transportation.

Organizations use a variety of methods to advertise services to potential users

Most organizations leverage relationships with partners (CalWorks, homeless shelters, other non-profits) and bring outreach to project users through already existing channels (e.g. Planning meetings at senior centers, community centers).

Examples:

- **San Rafael school shuttle** used already existing school-based outreach and communication.
- **The auto loan program** leverages relationships with banks. When people are turned down for auto loan, banks suggest the auto loan program.
- **Medical shuttle in Bayview Hunter's Point:** Hired mobility manager with paratransit experience who talked with organizations and individuals in community, made

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presentations to physicians and practitioners. Flyers designed with photo of the stop, signs and schedule at every stop.

Measuring effectiveness of programs is problematic

- When implementing a project, the emphasis of the program can shift, and it is important to measure this, not just the original objectives.
- How do you measure and compare different types of projects?
- Important to measure impact. Are you just serving the same people, or are you serving them and providing them with assistance to move on and improve their lives?
- Cannot effectively compare existing programs to new programs without robust project evaluation.

Lifeline Transportation Program Application Process and Program Oversight

Time lapse between proposal submittal and executed contract problematic

A few sponsors noted that the time lapse between proposal submittal and executed contract resulted in loss of interest from project partners. Also, it looks like there will be a gap between when the current funding cycle ends and next Lifeline funds are distributed. One project sponsor noted that it was “dangerous” to rely on Federal and State funding for any projects, due to the instability of those funding sources.

Unpredictability in funding makes it very difficult to secure matching funds from donors & partners

In general, securing matching funds is difficult, with many using some combination of in-kind and cash donations. Not finding a match is one reason potential Lifeline projects are not realized. Participants have a sense that transit agencies have an unfair advantage when competing for Lifeline Funds, since they have “dedicated funding streams.” More difficult to fund ongoing services. Many donors are into “the next big thing.”

Unclear channels of communication for project administration

Unsure where to direct questions about funding delays, payment and where to submit project information like user surveys. Staff changes at MTC and other agencies make it difficult to keep track of who they should contact. On the other hand at least one project sponsor has developed a strong relationship with MTC staff.

Non-standard reporting schedule creates inefficiencies

Unlike all other grants, Lifeline grant doesn't follow a standard quarterly reporting system; it is based on the contract start. This results in inefficient grant management and reporting. For school-based grant, noted that grant started six months before school started, and so is off-synch from the school year.

Short timeline between call for projects and deadline is challenging

Timeline between call for projects and deadline should be extended. Difficult to develop good grant application in just 30 days.

Most organizations liked having transit agencies as pass-through

Several organizations liked the pass-through situation, noting that it reduces their administrative barrier by shifting grant reporting to another agency. One participant was very pleased with

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SFMTA assistance, noting that they received a letter of support from MUNI in two days. Most organizations felt there was very little oversight, and liked that.

Question relevance of CBTPs

Outdated, don't necessarily reflect current concerns.

Suggestions for Potential Program Changes

- Ensure that there is a good plan, complete with implementation steps and identified responsible staff, before implementing projects.
- Create regular, predictable funding cycles.
- Support a more robust community process by requiring CMAs to show they have active community partners and MOUs with these partners before receiving funding for Lifeline projects.
- Acknowledge that Lifeline funds can be used for sustaining ongoing projects.
- MTC should reduce matching requirements for non-profits and community organizations, where MTC has discretion, and advocate for lower matching requirements at the federal level.
- Change productivity goals for Lifeline projects to recognize that target population is different than most users (e.g. frail, poor)
- Do not want a minimum grant amount because it would exclude many non-profits

APPENDIX D

Sponsor Survey

Appendix D. Sponsor Survey

MTC Lifeline Program Evaluation Project Sponsor Survey	
A. Basic Project Information	
The following survey will take approximately 10 minutes. All questions require an answer unless noted.	
If you have problems with the survey, contact Valerie Taylor .	
Before taking the survey, you may want to gather information on your project(s). Useful documents include the original application, any quarterly or annual reports, and copies of invoices submitted to date.	
We appreciate receiving your survey responses by the end of the day on Friday, February 11 .	
1. From the information provided in the email you received, please enter the project ID and the name of the project for this survey.	
Project ID:	<input type="text"/>
Project Name:	<input type="text"/>
2. Has this project been implemented?	
<input type="radio"/> Yes, implementation is complete.	
<input type="radio"/> Yes, implementation is in progress.	
<input type="radio"/> No, not implemented yet.	
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify): <input type="text"/>	
3. Which best describes the purpose of this project? Check all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Auto access	
<input type="checkbox"/> Demand response	
<input type="checkbox"/> Expanded dial-a-ride transit	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed route – new	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed route – continuing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed route - expanded	
<input type="checkbox"/> Information/outreach	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shuttle	
<input type="checkbox"/> Transit capital	
<input type="checkbox"/> User subsidy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <input type="text"/>	

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4. What has this project cost to date (i.e. funds expended)?

Please enter the dollar amount, or "not available", or "not applicable".

FY 05-06 Cost:	<input type="text"/>
FY 06-07 Cost:	<input type="text"/>
FY 07-08 Cost:	<input type="text"/>
FY 08-09 Cost:	<input type="text"/>
FY 09-10 Cost:	<input type="text"/>

B. Qualitative Assessment

5. What were the goals of this project, as described in the application for Lifeline Funds?

6. Did this project meet these goals?

- ☐ Yes, all of them.
- ☐ Yes, some of them.
- ☐ Not yet.
- ☐ No, none of them.
- ☐ Not sure, we are re-evaluating.

Please add any comments related to meeting project goals:

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7. Who is served by this project? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Low-income children
- ☐ Low-income seniors
- ☐ Low-income general public
- ☐ Other (please specify):

8. How did this project assist the people served?

9. Please indicate the degree to which the project addresses the following goals.

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some degree	Not very much	Not at all
This project was developed through a collaborative and inclusive process that included partnerships among a variety of stakeholders and outreach to underrepresented stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This project addresses transportation gaps identified in a Community-Based Transportation Plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This project improves the range of transportation choices for low-income people with new or expanded services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments (Optional):

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10. Please indicate any difficulty or barriers you faced in administering the project.

Check all that apply.

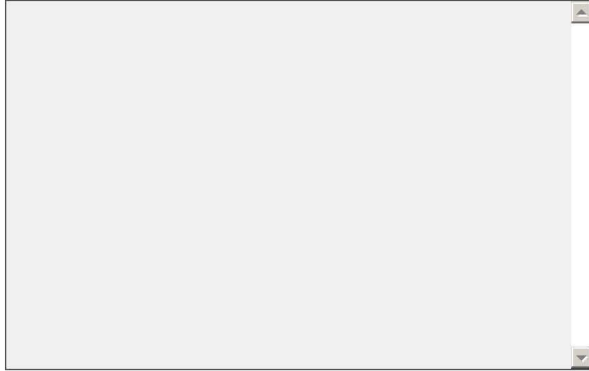
- ☐ Delay in receiving funding.
- ☐ Unclear invoicing procedures.
- ☐ Unclear reporting and monitoring requirements.
- ☐ High administrative costs relative to grant amount.
- ☐ Limitations on types of project activities placed by funding sources.
- ☐ Changes in the grant amounts over time.
- ☐ Other issues or comments:

11. Did you face any barriers or difficulties in implementing your project?

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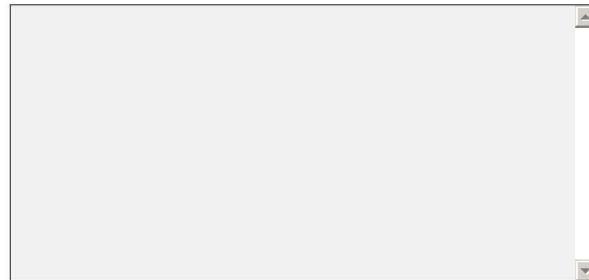
12. Please describe any best practices your agency/organization has identified in developing or carrying out your Lifeline project. A best practice is any action or strategy that you believe would be helpful to other agencies developing or implementing Lifeline projects.



13. When did/will the service provided by your project end?

- ☐ Not applicable (I.e., infrastructure projects).
- ☐ We do not have an anticipated end date.
- ☐ We have an anticipated end date (please specify month/year in comment field below).
- ☐ The project has already ended (please indicate why in comment field below).

Comments:



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14. The next section asks questions based on the type of project.

Please choose your project type from the list below.

- ☐ Operations (Services such as fixed route, shuttle, dial-a-ride)
- ☐ Capital (Purchase of transit vehicles, bus stop improvements, pedestrian / bicycle infrastructure)
- ☐ Programs (information, training, passenger subsidies, auto loan programs)

C. Operations Projects

15. How has this project improved or maintained service? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Expanded geographic coverage
- ☐ Extended hours/days of service
- ☐ Improved system capacity
- ☐ Improved access/connections
- ☐ Prevented or reduced service cuts / maintained existing service
- ☐ Other (please specify):

16. How many individuals are served by this project?

Enter the number, or "not available", or "not applicable".

Please indicate the unit you are using to report (e.g., annual one-way trips, number of vouchers purchased annually).

FY 05-06 Number served:

FY 06-07 Number served:

FY 07-08 Number served:

FY 08-09 Number served:

FY 09-10 Number served:

17. What is the approximate subsidy per rider (or customer) to provide the service?

Enter the number, or "not available", or "not applicable".

FY 05-06 Subsidy per rider/customer:

FY 06-07 Subsidy per rider/customer:

FY 07-08 Subsidy per rider/customer:

FY 08-09 Subsidy per rider/customer:

FY 09-10 Subsidy per rider/customer:

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18. Did this project increase access for low-income individuals to any of the following (check all that apply):

- ☐ Jobs
- ☐ Health care facilities
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ Education or training
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Social services
- ☐ Regional transit connection

D. Capital Projects

19. What was purchased with this project funding?

- ☐ New or improved transit stop or station, including amenities (shelters, benches, lighting)
- ☐ New rolling stock (fleet expansion)
- ☐ Replacement or rehabilitation of rolling stock
- ☐ Pedestrian infrastructure
- ☐ Bicycle infrastructure
- ☐ New, improved, or more safe access to transit
- ☐ Other (please specify)

20. How many units have been constructed/rehabilitated/purchased?
(Examples: linear feet of sidewalks, number of benches, number of vehicles)

E. Programmatic Projects

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21. How many people participated in the project?

Enter the number, or "not available", or "not applicable".

Please indicate the unit you are using to report (e.g., number of applications received, number of loans granted, number of people trained, number of customer contacts for informational projects, number of passes issued).

FY 05-06 Number served:

FY 06-07 Number served:

FY 07-08 Number served:

FY 08-09 Number served:

FY 09-10 Number served:

22. If the project provided informational materials, in what languages were these provided?

☐ Not applicable

☐ English

☐ Spanish

☐ Chinese

☐ Other (please specify):

23. If this was a marketing or informational project, has there been an increase in usage of any services that can be attributed to the project?

☐ Not applicable

☐ No

☐ Yes

Please explain:

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**24. If your project provides auto/repair loans, how many loans have been provided?
Enter the number, or "not available", or "not applicable".**

FY 05-06 Loans provided:	<input type="text"/>
FY 06-07 Loans provided:	<input type="text"/>
FY 07-08 Loans provided:	<input type="text"/>
FY 08-09 Loans provided:	<input type="text"/>
FY 09-10 Loans provided:	<input type="text"/>

25. If your project provides auto/repair loans, what are the default rates for these loans?

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Uncertain or do not know
- ☐ No loans have defaulted
- ☐ Some loans have defaulted, and the rate is :

Comments

26. Please enter any other comments you may have on the funding, administration, implementation, or any other aspect, of this project.

Survey Complete

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

If you have more projects on your list, please click the "Restart New Survey" button below to start at the beginning of the survey.

If you are done, you may close your browser window to exit the survey.

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If you have questions about the MTC Lifeline Project Evaluation project, contact Jennifer Yeaman at jyeamans@mtc.ca.gov.

If you have questions about this survey, contact Valerie Taylor at vtaylor@nelsonnygaard.com.

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APPENDIX E

Analysis of Success at Meeting Lifeline Program Goals by Funding Source

Appendix E. Analysis of Success at Meeting Lifeline Program Goals by Funding Source

INTRODUCTION

This document describes the results of a cross-tabulation that compares how well Lifeline Projects funded by different funding sources met Lifeline Program goals. Data is drawn from an online survey of Lifeline Project sponsors administered during the first three months of 2011.

Since the inception of the Lifeline Program, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission has used four funding sources to fund Lifeline projects:

- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program.** Federal program funds projects that reduce congestion and improve air quality.
- **Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC).** Federal program funds projects that provide or improve transportation access to employment and related activities for welfare recipients and low-income individuals.
- **State Transit Assistance (STA).** California program provides funding for mass transit operations and capital projects.
- **Proposition 1B Regional Transit Program (1B).** Bay Area program funds transit operations and capital projects.

Projects funded through MTC's Lifeline Program should meet three overarching goals:

- The project should be developed through a collaborative and inclusive process that includes partnerships among a variety of stakeholders and outreach to underrepresented stakeholders.
- The project should address transportation gaps identified in a Community-Based Transportation Plan.
- The project should improve the range of transportation choices for low-income people with new or expanded services.

Project sponsors were asked to evaluate how well their project met these three overarching goals. This memo explores whether there is a correlation between funding source and success at meeting project goals.

DATA SUMMARY

Projects may be funded through a combination of funding sources. For this analysis, all projects fully or partially funded by a funding source are included under that funding source. One project was funded by CMAQ, five projects were funded solely by JARC, 23 projects were funded solely by STA, 10 projects were funded solely by 1B, and 15 projects were funded by STA and JARC together.

Figures E-1 through E-6 summarize the project sponsors' self-evaluation and are organized according to the three Lifeline Project goals. The first table in each set shows the number of responses by funding source. The second table in each set shows the percent responding by funding source. Percentages do not include respondents that did not answer a question.

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The second table in each set also gives an average score for each funding source. Average scores are calculated by assigning weights to each answer. For this analysis, “Yes, very much so” was assigned 4 points, “Yes, to some degree” was assigned 3 points, “Not very much” was assigned 2 points, “Not at all” was assigned 1 point, and “Not sure/don’t know” was assigned 0 points. Average scores of 3.0 and higher are considered to have met Lifeline Project Goals at least to some degree.

Data from the one CMAQ-funded project are included in the tables, but should not be used to generalize to other CMAQ-funded projects.

Figure E-1 Was the project developed through a collaborative process? *Sum of Responses.*

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some degree	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure/don't know	No answer
CMAQ	0	1	0	0	0	0
JARC	9	11	0	0	0	0
STA	20	15	2	1	0	0
1B	4	4	0	2	0	0
Total	33	31	2	3	0	0

Figure E-2 Was the project developed through a collaborative process? *Percentiles.*

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some degree	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure/don't know		Average Score
CMAQ	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%		3.0
JARC	45%	55%	0%	0%	0%		3.5
STA	53%	39%	5%	3%	0%		3.4
1B	40%	40%	0%	20%	0%		3.0

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Figure E-3 Does the project address transportation gaps identified in a Community-Based Transportation Plan? *Sum of Responses.*

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some degree	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure/don't know	No answer
CMAQ	1	0	0	0	0	0
JARC	14	3	0	0	1	1
STA	22	6	3	3	1	3
1B	5	2	1	1	1	0
Total	42	11	4	4	3	4

Figure E-4 Does the project address transportation gaps identified in a Community-Based Transportation Plan? *Percentiles.*

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some degree	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure/don't know		Average Score
CMAQ	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%		4.0
JARC	78%	17%	0%	0%	6%		3.6
STA	63%	17%	9%	9%	3%		3.3
1B	50%	20%	10%	10%	10%		2.9

Figure E-5 Does the project improve the range of transportation choices for low-income people? *Sum of Responses.*

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some degree	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure/don't know	No answer
CMAQ	1	0	0	0	0	0
JARC	13	4	1	0	0	1
STA	25	5	4	1	0	3
1B	4	4	1	1	0	0
Total	43	13	6	2	0	4

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Figure E-6 Does the project improve the range of transportation choices for low-income people?
Percentiles.

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some degree	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure/don't know		Average Score
CMAQ	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%		4.0
JARC	72%	22%	6%	0%	0%		3.7
STA	71%	14%	11%	3%	0%		3.5
1B	40%	40%	10%	10%	0%		3.1

FINDINGS

Using the average answer for each funding source, the data suggest that Lifeline Projects funded through Proposition 1B are less likely to meet Lifeline goals than projects funded through JARC or STA. There are too few data points to conclude how well CMAQ-funded Lifeline Projects meet the goals.

JARC-funded projects consistently scored the highest of all funding sources, though for some goals, JARC projects were very close to STA-funded projects. JARC projects were very successful at meeting the goal of improving the range of transportation choices for low-income people, with an average score of 3.7. JARC projects include transit operations, auto-based programs, and information and outreach programs.

For all three Lifeline goals, Proposition 1B-funded projects consistently scored between 0.4 and 0.6 points lower than projects funded through STA, JARC, or a combination of the two funding sources. Proposition 1B projects scored particularly low when evaluating how well the projects addressed transportation gaps identified in a Community Based Transportation Plan. For this goal, 1B projects only scored 2.9 points on average, meaning they were more likely to not meet the goal than to meet the goal. These lower scores may reflect the fact that all 1B-funded projects evaluated in the survey were capital projects, rather than operations.